

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY BERLIN PRIORITY

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UNCLAS STATE 210558

EO 11652: N/A

SUBJECT: MP/TV: ACQUISITION OF NEW NASA FILM, QUESTION OF LIFE
(29:30 MINUTES, 16MM, ENGLISH ONLY). ORDERS REQUESTED BY
AUGUST 27, 1976.

FOR P&C:

1. FILM EXPLORES QUESTION OF LIFE IN OUR GALAXY IN CONTEXT
OF VIKING I AND II EXPLORATION OF MARTIAN SURFACE. IT MAY THUS
BE OF PARTICULARLY TIMELY USE AS RESULTS OF VIKING I ARE KNOWN
AND VIKING II REACHES MARS. FILM DESCRIBES CHARACTERISTICS
OF LIVING AND NON-LIVING THINGS ON EARTH AND NOTES THAT THESE
LIFE FORMS REQUIRE OXYGEN AND WATER IN ORDER TO SURVIVE. FINE
MICROSCOPIC PHOTOGRAPHY IS USED. PRESUMED GENESIS OF MARS
VISUALIZED THROUGH VOLCANIC ERUPTIONS BELIEVED NECESSARY FOR
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EXISTENCE OF WATER HELD VITAL TO SHAPING OF TOPOGRAPHIC FEATURES

OF MARS. UNANSWERED QUESTIONS ABOUT DISAPPEARANCE OF MARTIAN WATER FOLLOWED BY LABORATORY DEMONSTRATION OF FORMATION OF POLAR ICE OR FROST. FILM ENDS WITH SEQUENCE ON VIKING LANDER AND DESCRIBES ORGANIC ANALYSIS INSTRUMENT THAT WILL TRY TO DETECT LIFE ON MARS.

2. COMMENT: PRODUCED PRIMARILY FOR AMERICAN AUDIENCES, FILM ASSUMES AUDIENCES KNOW THAT MODELS OF MARTIAN SURFACE USED IN DEMONSTRATIONS. POSTS USING MUST STRESS -- BEFORE FILM IS SHOWN -- THAT MODELS WERE USED, OTHERWISE FOREIGN AUDIENCES MAY ASSUME THAT SEQUENCES SHOWING MARTIAN SURFACE WERE SENT BY VIKING I. ADDITIONALLY, TRANSITIONS BETWEEN SEQUENCES ON EARTH LIFE FORMS, MARTIAN GENESIS, AND MARTIAN TOPOGRAPHY AND POLAR ICE LACK COMPLETELY LOGICAL VISUAL AND NARRATIVE DEVELOPMENT. INCLUDED IS FOOTAGE PREVIOUSLY CONTAINED IN FILMS PRODUCED BY NASA AND OFFERED WORLDWIDE: LIFE? VIKING, AND MRS, THE SEARCH BEGINS. NEW ARE SECTIONS ON LANDER AND DETAILS ON LIFE-GENESIS ISSUE. NASA PRODUCED FILM UNDER HEAVY TIME PRESSURE TO MEET DEADLINE OF SEPTEMBER 3. AS A RESULT, EFFECTIVENESS OF FILM FLAWED BY DEFICIENCIES. BECAUSE IT DOES NOT "HANG TOGETHER" AND DOES NOT MOVE SMOOTHLY TOWARDS FILM'S CONCLUSION, IT MAY BE DIFFICULT FOR SOME FOREIGN AUDIENCES TO FOLLOW.

3. BECAUSE OF TIMELINESS OF FILM'S CONTENT AND WORLDWIDE INTEREST IN VIKING LANDERS, FILM BEING OFFERED ENGLISH ONLY, SMALL FORMAT VIDEOTAPE, WITH SCRIPT. NO LANGUAGE VERSIONS WILL BE MADE.

4. PLEASE NOTE: TELEGRAPHIC ORDERS REQUESTED, VIKING II LANDING PRESENTLY SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER 3, 1976. CAN PROVIDE IMMEDIATE SHIPMENT THIRTY ORDERS OF HALF-INCH VIDEOTAPES AND FIVE ORDERS THREE-QUARTER-INCH VIDEOTAPE. POSTS URGED DETERMINE WHETHER TAPES WILL BE RECEIVED IN TIME (PROVIDING THEY CAN USE ENGLISH LANGUAGE) FOR TELEVISION PLACEMENT PRIOR SEPTEMBER 3, 1976.

5. ADDRESS ORDER AGENCY, IMV/R-ATTENTION IOA/RMS. NCLUDE TITLE AND ID NUMBER. INDICATE IF SCRIPT DESIRED.

6. CATALOGUING DATA BY OM FOLLOWS.

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Message Attributes

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